

Small Business Person of the Year

WILLIAM DAY

BUILDS REPUTATION ON SERVICE, PROFESSIONALISM

It was the year 2000, the start of a new millennium, with uncertainty about “Y2K” and many other question marks on the horizon. Yet Bill Day and his wife Joanne, (who had just had twin babies), took \$7,000 of their savings and started a new business out of their garage. Today, that very small business has grown to 17 employees and is one of the most respected of its kind in the Southeast—and William E. (Bill) Day, Jr. has been named “2006 Small Business Person of the Year” by the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

Day had been in the restoration industry for nearly two decades when he formed North Ridge Restoration, LLC in response to what he saw as a lack of personal touch by the big companies. “I realized that they didn’t seem to get what was important anymore. They looked at small claims and personal needs as not vital to their business. Atlanta needed a company that could understand the restoration process as a people-helping-people business.”

Restoration needs can emerge virtually overnight and cause extreme distress for families and businesses. Damages from fire, flood, storms, chemicals or mold and mildew may appear to have ruined important heirlooms, documents and business papers—or worse, compromise people’s health. However, that is where North Ridge Restoration steps in to perform what may seem like miracles. Day is a certified restorer, a credential that is held by only a small fraction of professionals in the restoration industry. Two of North Ridge staff members are working toward the designation and the firm has “combined years of experience equal to or better than the best the industry has to offer,” according to Day.

In addition to technical expertise, Day looks for the right people to do each job in this very service-oriented business. “Taking care of a customer who has been personally traumatized by a fire or water loss requires an employee to be

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Brandon Beach (center), president of GNFC, congratulates Danny Tompkins (left) and William Day, Jr. (right).

Award Nominees Reflect High Standards of Excellence

Members of the 2006 Small Business Person of the Year Committee for the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce had a tough job as they reviewed the nominations of 16 business people for this year's award, says Small Business Committee Chairman Susan Brown (who recused herself from the process this year because of her position with North Ridge Restoration, the company owned by winner William E. Day, Jr.).

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a protector, a counselor, a psychologist, a professional and a friend. Finding people who can remain calm and supportive during adverse situations has been key to North Ridge Restoration achieving a reputation for excellence."

Most young businesses want more employees and bigger revenues in a hurry, but Day has North Ridge Restoration on a business plan that emphasizes slow and deliberate growth. "We are in competition with national and international companies. We have to outperform them and we have to outthink them," says Day. "We can manage the business and grow by bringing on people and equipment as we need them, which makes us much more efficient in our performance."

Just as important to Day as business success has been the company's ability to help people in need. That has often translated to volunteering services and time, most publicly when the company virtually shut down for the day to help organize, with the Doubletree Hotel, the donation of two 18-wheelers full of relief supplies for Hurricane Katrina victims. Closer to home, Day donates company resources to the community by furnishing teams of volunteers (on company payroll) two days each month to North Fulton Community Charities.

Bill gives credit to the entire team at North Ridge Restoration for helping bring the company to its present level of success. "In this environment, we don't have principals. Everyone is a principal in our business model. They are great producers who make things happen."

The Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce is the catalyst for economic development, business growth and quality of life in North Fulton. For more information about the Chamber, call 770-993-8806 or stop by the Chamber's office, located at Northwinds Four, 11605 Haynes Bridge Road, Suite 100, Alpharetta.

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"There are so many wonderfully astute people, great business people, in our community. One of the things we talk about a lot is entrepreneurial spirit. Everyone can't invent a new widget, but they can take a business and make it different and more successful. That's what these nominees have done."

The winner was announced at a recent Chamber event where accolades were also presented to these other two finalists:



DANNY TOMPKINS
President, Admin America

Tompkins, whose background was a corporate controller, formed Admin America in 1988 "on his dining room table" and with a handful of clients. Today the successful firm provides administration of certain types of employee benefit plans for nearly 400 clients across the Southeast and nation. Tompkins has been active in the Greater North Fulton Chamber since 1992, having served as chairman of the board. Admin America has 12 employees, including his oldest and youngest sons. Tompkins is optimistic about the company's ability to continue to adapt to changes in the industry as more companies outsource their human resources functions and attempt to reduce health care costs.



S. JAY PATEL
President, North Point Hospitality Group, Inc.

"Our company mission has always been to take great care of our team members and they will in turn take great care of our guests," says Jay Patel, whose company currently owns three limited service hotels and two full service hotels. In the past 10 years, his company has developed six hotels in North Fulton County, as well as hotels in Buckhead and Savannah. Patel helped form the Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau in 1998 and was its first chairman. He has been active on the board of directors of the Greater North Fulton Chamber since 2001.